

# R U L E S

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## ARTICLES of AGREEMENT,

ESTABLISHED BY THE

*Protestant Providential Society,*

At the BAKER's-HALL, in the City of BRISTOL,

At the COMMENCEMENT of the YEAR 1792;

PRIMARILY MOVED and BROUGHT FORWARD

B Y

A. NONMUS, C. BREUL, and J. LAWRENCE.

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Love the Brotherhood. 1 Peter, ii. 17.

By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another. John xiii. 35.

LOVE is the fulfilling of the Law. Romans xiii. 10.

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Let others chuse the Sons of Mirth  
To give a Relish to their Wine,  
We love the Men of Heavenly Birth,  
Whose Thoughts and Language are Divine.

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B R I S T O L;

Printed by S. PONNER, in CASTLE-GREEN.

1792.

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## ADVERTISEMENT,

To the FRIENDS of the PROTESTANT  
PROVIDENTIAL SOCIETY in general,  
and those who wish to join it in particular:

BELOVED FRIENDS,

This Society is established on the principles of friendship, benevolence and good will, with a view to our mutual benefit in general, particularly in times of affliction, infirmity, and age. But temporalities are far from being our only object. We consider the promotion of pure religion among us as a matter of infinite importance: consequently, we resolve to receive those only who are friends to and possessors of the same, as far as we can discern. Those who sincerely wish to be such, we will not reject. Therefore, we say to every lover of Christ, of his people, and of his pure and pleasant ways, if any of you desire to join us, come forward, we will receive you with open arms. But, to the profane and ungodly of every sort we say, turn ye from your evil ways to the Lord our Redeemer, and then, we would gladly receive any of you, but not till then.---  
On these principles our union is founded, and by them we intend to act; observing at the same time, that the follow-

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ing rules are to guide our conduct, and that of every member we receive, whether in humbler or more exalted situations in life. A steady adherence to these articles, as they respect our union, is what we warmly recommend to every member: not doubting but every brother will see, the order they establish, is necessary for the mutual benefit of such a connection. We request also, that every member will make the general welfare of this society their study, and do all in their power to establish its reputation both in a civil and religious view. But, above all, that they study to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, by departing from all iniquity, and a regular attendance on every ordinance of divine appointment. Then may we expect the blessing of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, to prosper and crown us both living and dying; which may he grant to every one of us, for his own Name's sake. *Amen.*

J. LAWRENCE,  
SECRETARY to the SOCIETY.

BAKERS-HALL, January 1, 1792.



# ARTICLES, &c.

To be observed by US who call ourselves

T H E

PROTESTANT PROVIDENTIAL SOCIETY;

INSTITUTED JANUARY 1, 1792.

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## PREFATORY CONSIDERATIONS,

*WE, the members of this Society, taking into serious consideration, our liableness to a variety of afflictions in this mortal life, do mutually agree to form a Brotherly Connection, to lend each other that aid and support, in times of adversity, age, and infirmity, which in such cases is necessary and desirable. That it may be done without burdening any individual, we agree to observe the following RULES, for the purposes of raising a fund, and the establishment of order and regularity among us.*

ARTICLE I.

## A R T I C L E I.

**R**ESOLVED, that we unite in christian love and the fear of God : immoralities, and disorderly conduct shall be conscientiously avoided by every one of us. We will meet at the Society-Room the first Monday in every month ; the hours of meeting shall be from seven to nine o'clock in the evening, but if business requires longer time, till the books are closed. All our meetings shall open and close with prayer ; the Secretary shall open the meetings, and the members take it in turn to close the same. No one shall at any time propose the omission of prayer at beginning or ending, on a fine of 2s. 6d. or be excluded. Our behaviour and conversations shall be such as become our allegiance to Christ, good subjects, and good citizens.

II. This Society shall consist of Protestants only ; Papists and Swedenborgians we reject.

2dly. No pious persons from either of the Protestant denominations shall be objected to, if Calvinistical in sentiment, or not disposed to rail against it ; which shall not be suffered.

3dly. Protestant Dissenters of the above description, we have a peculiar desire to welcome among us.

4thly. For the promotion of piety and good order among us, it is resolved to admit none but with a recommendation from one of our members, who knows them to be sober persons, and religiously inclined ; except such as are generally known to be pious characters ; such may come forward and propose themselves.

5thly.

5thly. Persons proposed for admission, not generally known, shall stand candidates till the next monthly meeting, and if upon enquiry it appears proper to receive them, they shall then be admitted.

6thly. Our enquiries and conversations upon the propriety or impropriety of receiving persons proposed, shall be prudently entered upon by us, that no person's character may suffer by it: any transgressing this rule shall be fined 2s. 6d. or be excluded.

7thly. Every one admitted a member of this Society must be able to earn at least 10s. 6d. per week, at his usual calling.

8thly. Those admitted after there are thirty members must pay 2s. 6d. entrance; after fifty members, 5s.; after one hundred members, 10s. 6d. and be allowed to pay it at three monthly meetings, if needed—longer time shall not be granted.

III. No person shall be admitted into this Society who is above forty, or under eighteen years of age, except such young person be independent of superiors, and such a character as the preceding article requires; nor any that is afflicted with an habitual or incurable disorder, or that lives in the practice of any known wilful sin. If any come in among us, contrary to this rule, and it be proved afterward, he or they, shall be excluded immediately without benefit.—The number of members shall remain indefinite.

IV. No member of another benefit Society shall be admitted into this, while he remains a member of that Society; nor shall any from this to another, while he remains with us. If  
any



any member attempts a violation of this rule, and it be clearly proved, he shall be excluded without benefit. But this shall not reject a Shipwright, if a serious character, nor forbid a member's becoming a subscriber to the Tontine.

V. No person shall be admitted into this Society who works at the White Lead House, Colouring House, or any poisonous employment; other callings not dangerous to health we do not reject, if they amount to the wages required in the 6th particular of the second article, except soldiers and sailors. If any come among us that this rule excludes, and it be proved afterward, they shall be ejected without benefit. If any member be impressed into his Majesty's service in time of war, and he survive and return, he shall be received as a free member, except he has a pension from government. Any person drawn in the militia, and obliged to go, he in like manner shall be received upon his return; but in both these cases, it shall be upon condition they remain what we understood them to be when they were received, that is—*serious persons*.

VI. Every member shall pay to the joint Stock 1s. 6d. per month. No money shall be spent on the monthly meetings; nor will we ever meet at a public-house. No member shall remain in arrears longer than two monthly meetings; and if he does not clear off his arrears the second monthly meeting, shall forfeit 6d. and be written to by the Secretary; the third monthly meeting he must pay both subscriptions and fine, or forfeit 1s.; and if he neglects to clear off entirely the fourth meeting

meeting, he shall then be excluded without benefit. A month's notice shall ever precede exclusion, nor any be excluded without it. The Secretary neglecting to give this notice, shall be fined 1s.

VII. There shall be a box with three separate locks, to deposit the Society's money in. There shall be a Secretary to remain in office, and two Stewards chosen twice every year, after the first year is expired; the times of chusing shall be the monthly meetings in *January* and *July*. The Secretary and Stewards shall each keep a key of the box, and if either of the keys are hurt or lost, they that were intrusted with them must make them good.--- A responsible person shall be chosen to keep the box, and give security for its full value, and the return of the same to the Society-room as often as called for. The Secretary's office shall be perpetual, that is, so long as he is able to fulfil it, if he chuses to remain in it, and discharge the duties of it with propriety. He shall have a quarterly salary of three-pence from every member in the Society.

VIII. All the members shall pay one whole year before they are free of benefit. After that, if any member is sick, or any way afflicted by the hand of God, so as to be incapable of his employment, he shall receive *nine shillings* per week if but one hundred pounds are in the box, and *ten shillings* if two hundred pounds are in it, during his incapacity; but if that incapacity continue longer than three months, his pay must be reduced if the state of the fund requires it.

2dly. If any member feign himself sick  
B with



with a view to get money when he needs it not, and it be proved against him, he shall be excluded immediately without benefit, and admitted no more.

3dly. If any sick member receiving pay, be found working any otherwise than by approbation of this Society, upon notice given, he or they shall be excluded immediately without return: but this shall not forbid a sick brother in trade, the settling his own accounts, if necessary, nor his walking out to take fresh air, for the recovery of his health. The sick must pay their monthly subscriptions, and they shall be paid from the time they reported, till recovered.

IX. No member shall receive any kind of benefit from this Society, for afflictions brought upon himself by lewdness, or any unlawful exercise. If any of our members at any time or place, are guilty of drunkenness, or any other immorality whatever, and it be proved by two of our members, he or they shall be reprehended, and fined 2s. 6d. for the first offence, and if found guilty of a second offence, shall be excluded without benefit. As this respects the conduct of members out of the Society-room, those who know another guilty of crimes must report it to the Stewards and Secretary, and they shall be warned to appear at the next monthly meeting; there the matter shall be fairly stated, and if the complained person be proved guilty, he shall receive his reprehension and fine; but if it be proved a false accusation, the accusers shall have the reproof of the accused. The complained person not appearing when warned, shall be held guilty, and fined accordingly;



accordingly; and on refusing of either, be excluded.

X. Every member above sixty years of age, shall be allowed *ten pounds* per annum if 1000l. are in the box; *eight pounds* per annum if 800l. or 500l. are in the same, more or less, in proportion to the ability of the fund. The aged shall pay their monthly subscriptions till they die; and their pay shall continue from its commencement to the day of their death. They may do what they are able, to strengthen their income; and when they die, we will bury them in a decent manner, but will be at liberty to give or withhold a legacy, as prudence may dictate, and the case require.

XI. When any free member dies under sixty years of age, he shall be buried by this Society; eight pounds shall be allowed for the funeral of a free member, one half to the expence of the funeral, and the other half given to his widow or executor; four pounds shall be allowed a free member at the death of his wife, to be laid out at his own discretion in the expence of her burial.

2dly. After the first three years, in case we have 200l. in the box, there shall be ten pounds allowed at the death of a free member, and five pounds at the death of his wife; to be laid out as above specified.

3dly. When death happens to either a free member or his wife, the surviving friends must give notice to the Stewards within three hours after the decease, if within three miles of the Society-room, and as soon as possible if further off, upon a fine of 2s. 6d. for delay.

4thly. The Stewards shall give notice to the  
Secretary

Secretary, to send summonses to every member one whole day before the interment.

5thly. Any member absenting himself when summoned on the occasion, without evident necessity, shall be fined 1s. or be excluded.

• 6thly. The Stewards and Secretary neglecting their duty in this business, shall be fined 2s. 6d. unless evident necessity hinder them, which must be proved, or they shall be excluded.

XII. Every member shall pay 1s. 6d. at the funeral of a free member, and 1s. at the funeral of a free members wife. The attendance of all the members shall be determined by the desire of the deceased, prior to his or her death, or by the desire of the friends who survive. No impertinent unseasonable talk shall be suffered at a funeral, but such only as becomes the awful solemnity. If any member introduce conversation contrary to this rule, at a funeral, he or they, shall be fined 2s. 6d. or be excluded.

XIII. Any member shall be at liberty to reside in any part of the kingdom, but must send notice in writing to the Stewards and Secretary within three months after his removal, and specify the place of abode he is settled in, or be excluded.

2dly. If he is sick or maimed, so as to be unable to work, he must send a certificate of the same to the Stewards, signed by the Minister and Deacons, whose ministry he attends, or any two reputable persons, whose veracity may be depended upon. Less than two reputable names shall not be accepted. His disorder, and the time he was taken ill, must be noticed,

3dly.

3dly. Such absent member must pay the fine imposed on those who refuse to be Stewards. Absence shall not excuse any from a fine, when it comes to them to be Stewards: nor shall they be excused from the pay of a present member at a funeral. The absent must clear off all accounts once in six months, or be excluded.

XIV. The Secretary and Stewards shall be in their places on the monthly meetings by seven o'clock in the evening, on a fine of 1s. for every wilful neglect.

2dly. The Stewards and Secretary shall visit the sick every week separately, each taking his day in rotation, and give the Society an account of the state of the sick the next monthly meeting; or be fined for every wilful omission 1s.

3dly. Besides the Stewards and Secretary there shall be six visiting members chosen, each of them shall visit in the same manner as the Stewards and Secretary, that is, in rotation, or forfeit 1s. for every wilful neglect.

4thly. The visitors shall pray with and exhort the sick, according to the ability that God hath given them. Any of the members may visit if they please: all the visitors shall tell the Society the ideas they entertain of the sick, or forfeit 1s.

5thly. The Stewards, or one of them, shall carry the sick members' money, and pay him; and when the sick shall recover strength, he must signify to the Stewards his intention of going off the box, or be excluded.

6thly. A member refusing to be Steward when it comes to his turn, shall be fined 2s. 6d.  
and



and on refusal of either be excluded. Two brothers shall not be Stewards at one time, but they may succeed each other:—the Stewards shall be chosen from the members as they stand on the list, and the visiting members also.

XV. If at any time a Steward is ill, or goes out of town, the next member on the list shall serve in his place, on a fine of 1s. 3d. but such service for another, shall not excuse him from serving for himself, when it comes to his turn.

2dly. If any of the Society's money be spent by either of the Stewards contrary to the rules thereof, they shall make it good in one month, or be excluded, and be liable to be sued for the same. The Stewards may have three pounds of the Society's money in their hands, but not more; they must give an account to the Society how they lay out the money entrusted with them.

XVI. If any member is guilty of profane swearing, or abusive language in any of our meetings, he shall be excluded immediately, without benefit. Cursing, or drinking to excess, shall never be suffered; nor any one permitted to enter the Society-room disguised with liquor, on any consideration whatever.

XVII. If any of the members have at any time any thing to propose to the Society, by way of improvement, they may do it at our monthly or annual meetings, but not elsewhere. Freedom of speech shall be granted to any member that can shew good reason for his proposal, nor shall any other member interrupt him.

2dly. The Secretary and Stewards shall have full power to command silence when needed,  
and

and if not obeyed the first time, the offender shall forfeit 3d.; if he persists in talking when commanded to be silent, he shall forfeit 6d: if guilty of the same offence again, shall forfeit 1s. or be excluded.

3dly. Ten minutes shall be allowed to any member to speak his sentiments, and produce his arguments. No member shall talk in any language in our meetings, but the English only, on a fine of 6d. for the first offence; nor shall any two members talk at a time upon the same fine, and double for the second offence. A member may put the Secretary or Stewards in remembrance to command silence; if necessary; they neglecting it, shall forfeit 1s. But every member must avoid officious forwardness, or they shall be fined as needless talkers, as the Stewards are for neglecting duty.

XVIII. On WHIT-MONDAY in every year, there shall be a convention of all the members at the Society-room; when a hymn shall be sung, a chapter read, and one of the members shall engage in prayer; then proceed in regular order to CASTLE-GREEN MEETING, the first year, to hear a sermon on the occasion: after divine worship, to return in the same order to the Society-room, and dine together in sobriety and christian friendship; avoiding all excess and intemperance.—The Minister shall be invited to dine with us.

2dly. There shall be a collection at the place of worship, at the close of divine service; the money collected shall be given to the poor, and laid out in such pious purposes as shall be judged most proper, by this Society, or a majority of the same.

3dly.

3dly. The morning of the day shall be appointed for the purpose, and divine worship begin at eleven o'clock. Every member must be in his place at the Society-room by ten o'clock, or a quarter after at the farthest, on a fine of 6d. and if absent the whole day, without just cause, he shall be fined 1s. 6d. and on refusal of either be excluded.

4thly. As it is designed to admit serious persons, not only from CASTLE-GREEN, but the *Tabernacle, Bridge-street Chapel, Pithay and Broad-mead Meetings*, and *Lady Huntingdon's Chapel*, that in case it be desired, and granted by a majority, we will worship at either of the places before named after the first year; it shall be appointed by this Society where it shall be, the monthly meeting preceding; and it is desired that every member will be present at the last monthly meeting before the annual meeting.

5thly. This is a perpetual rule, our annual worship shall never be at a parish Church, nor at any Meeting or place of worship, that is not Calvinistical. But we do not intend to reject a serious church-man, if any may wish to join us, and conform to our rules. We mean the same thing to the pious of the Rev. John Wesley's connections,

XIX. Every member shall pay 1s. towards the expence of the dinner, or more if the expence requires it. Any gentleman, who may be a friend to the institution, shall be welcome to dine with us upon paying the same as the members. The money shall be collected from the members the monthly meeting preceding. Any member refusing shall be fined 1s. or be excluded.

XX.



XX. The Secretary shall take and keep an account of every member's name, age, and place of abode, with the time of their admission. Any member living more than three miles from the Society-room shall be accounted an absent member.—These articles shall be printed, and every member shall purchase a copy, and pay 6d. for the same, and sign his name in token of approbation of them.

XXI. No member shall be suffered to say or do any thing to scandalize the Society, or any fellow-member; nor shall any reflect upon a sick, aged, or infirm member, for receiving pay, upon a fine of 2s. 6d. or immediate exclusion. The afflicted shall be helped without reflection, and the aged paid without grudging.

2dly. If it appears at any time to the Secretary, Stewards, or visiting members, that any attempt to impose upon us, they shall call a Committee, which may be composed of themselves and the next four members on the list: to this Committee the matter shall be fairly stated; and they shall take such steps for satisfaction, as to them appears most proper; and if it be proved that imposition is intended, such imposter shall be excluded immediately, according to article the 8th.

XXII. If any of the members should be brought down in circumstances, by the afflicting hand of God, and not by their own folly and misconduct, and should be arrested for debt, and cast into prison; such shall be visited, and provided for with such personal support as a sick brother is, while he remains in that afflicting situation. But if any mem-

ber should be imprisoned for any kind of villainy whatever, he shall be cast out from this Society, and never admitted again.

XXIII. The first three years there shall be but eight pounds allowed at the death of a member, and four pounds at the death of a member's wife, let the sum in the box be what it may. Afterward, if the stock be large enough, it shall be as the eleventh article specifies.

All fines shall go to the box, and when there is an eligible sum, it shall be put out to interest; small sums on notes of hand, in a dubious way, shall never be lent to any one. When money is put out to interest, it shall be by the determination of the Society, or at least by three-fourths of it. The Anniversary will be the most proper time to appoint it, but we will be at liberty to do it when we think proper.

XXIV. The members' names shall be called over by the Secretary immediately after the first prayer; and also at a quarter before nine o'clock, when the books will be closed; but, should any member be unavoidably detained, and enter the Society-room after the books are closed, he will be permitted to pay his subscription-money *before* or *at* nine o'clock, after which time no money will be received.

## CONFIRMATION.

IF at any future period it appears to this Society, or to a majority, that it is necessary to add to or alter any of these rules, we will be at liberty to do it. Any of the members may propose an alteration, if they can shew good reasons for it, not otherwise.—There shall be a minute-book kept, to enter proposals of this kind, and at the annual meeting it shall be discussed; and if approved by a majority, it shall then be adopted: and when this takes place, such alterations shall be of full force with those already established; but *these* are the lines of conduct by which we are *now* to act.

(Signed)

J. LAWRENCE, Secretary.

{ A. NONMUS, }  
 { C. BREUL. } Stewards.

*M. Robinson. Jan. 1. 1792*





## I N D E X.

## A

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|                                        |      |    |
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## H

|                              |    |    |
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## I

|                                              |    |    |
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## K

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## L

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|------------------------------------------|----|---|

## M

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## N

|                                                                                             |   |   |
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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|



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B<sup>⚔</sup>L

